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ABSTRACT

If fundamental change in education is to be lasting and effective, it must be a systemic transformation that pervades all aspects of the organization. The New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) mission requires rapid, comprehensive change. The Community Learning Centers program described in this document features systemic change with a paradigm shift toward learning and away from teaching. In July 1992, NASDC awarded a 5-year grant to Public School Incentives (PSI), a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization supporting school improvement, to develop the Community Learning Centers (CLCs). This publication presents 24 principles and design elements of the Community Learning Centers program, some of which include: (1) Each CLC site must negotiate with the local governance authority to achieve charter- or contract-school status; (2) CLCs have well-articulated missions, beliefs, and assumption statements to guide their development; (3) standards for student attainment must be world class and derived from community input; and (4) curriculum is designed from outcomes. The publication also presents a vision/mission statement and describes other key elements of the program--standards and assessment, curriculum and instructional strategy, professional development, technology, school organization and governance, community services and supports, public engagement, and the implementation process for new schools. (LMI)

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ED 385 898

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

Design Specifications

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A New American School's Project

EA 026 906

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SUMMARY

Most institutional change is piecemeal and fragmented. Educators toil to bring about changes in the present system of education and many have been successful at introducing new practices. This type of change is usually incremental. We don't disparage this, as many organizations develop this way. But in most cases, isolated incremental changes do not result in changes in the basic processes of learning. Instead, they give an illusion of progress through a facade of activity.

"[I]ncremental changes .... give an illusion of progress through a facade of activity"

Most of the problems that beset education "are obvious, well understood, and of long standing. Educators and their critics have been rhetorically hammering away at them for several decades. It is the remedies that seem problematic. None seems to stick." Why? Things remain the same, "because it is impossible to change very much without changing most of everything. The result is paralysis."[1]

The most frequent basis of status quo involves old paradigms. Traditions, attitudes, mind sets, and beliefs can be so deeply ingrained that nothing penetrates the status quo shell. Resistance to doing things differently takes a heavy toll on the morale of those wishing to advance new programs. Many educators seek eagerly and impatiently to break free of conventional programs. They become excited about being able try new practices, but they find that the "system" doesn't respond sufficiently.

Systemic Transformation

For fundamental change in education to be lasting and effective, it must be a systemic transformation that pervades all aspects of the organization. To break the gridlock of any well-established institution requires either a fresh start under highly favorable conditions or long periods of gestation. But with children's lives at stake, we do not have the luxury of time. The New American Schools Development Corporation mission requires rapid, comprehensive change. The Community Learning Centers program described in this document features systemic or comprehensive change with a paradigm shift towards learning, and away from teaching.

"The CLC program features systemic or comprehensive change with a paradigm shift towards learning, and away from teaching"

The Community Learning Centers program does not promote change for the sake of change. The program proceeds from the premise that, although educators are dedicated and work hard to help all students succeed, too many students graduate without adequate skills and knowledge for the 21st century.

Rather than tune up the old structure, we believe a more constructive approach lies with a systems strategy. That means a thorough examination of the present organization and practice of schooling and its effectiveness. There must be a willingness, if necessary, to jettison ineffective practices, even the entire organiza-

"There must be a willingness, if necessary, to jettison ineffective practices, even the entire organization"

tion. The answer lies in working smarter, not just harder. Systemic change involves all parts of the system: roles, program, budget governance, evaluation, etc., and not just a collection of these parts but how they interact and influence each other. Systems thinking runs counter to usual parts-type thinking and therefore taxes the ability of organizations to correct and improve functions in comprehensive ways.

"When schools don't achieve ... after significant effort, a new way must be found."

For schools however, basic processes of learning need wholesale upgrading. There can be no more dropouts or "throwaway" students—all students must succeed and reach high standards. When schools don't achieve this after significant effort, a new way must be found.

"A systems approach reallocates resources and seeks to develop under-utilized resources"

Many educators respond that more money must be provided. Money is very important, but the wait for substantially more money will be very long under current conditions. A systems approach reallocates resources and seeks to develop under-utilized resources, such as students. More must be done with the same resources!

Like many institutions of modern life—business, medicine, government—schools must generate greater, much greater, results, without greater resources to create powerful new learning systems. The New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) focus is on "reinventing American education."

In July 1992, NASDC awarded a five-year grant to Public School Incentives (PSI), a Minnesota based nonprofit organization supporting school improvement to develop the "Community Learning Centers" project described in this document. The project has four principals: Wayne Jennings, Project Director and President of Designs For Learning, Inc.; Joe Nathan, Director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; Elaine Salinas, Program Officer at the Urban Coalition, and John Cairns, an attorney with Briggs and Morgan.

Principles and Design Elements

The following are the principles and design elements which must be met by each Community Learning Center site in the New American Schools program of educational reform:

1. Community Learning Center sites represent systemic or comprehensive change. The project does not aim to tune-up or fix schools or programs. Rather, all assumptions about education are open to examination with the end results being much greater student achievement for all youth and the establishment of the Centers as headquarters for lifelong learning in the communities.

2. Each Community Learning Center site must negotiate with the local governance authority to become a charter or contract school in order to overcome barriers to systemic change. Community Learning Centers can be organized as charter schools (provided for in some state statutes) or the equivalent (as provided through authority of the state superintendent in some states or under tribal governance) or as a tightly drawn contract between the Center and the school district. The contract authorizes broad site decision-making powers in the areas of program, staffing, and budget. Each Center must have the full local, state, and federal revenues students represent and the authority to shape the program, staffing, and budget to accomplish its mission and organization.

3. Community Learning Centers have well articulated missions, beliefs and assumption statements to guide their development. The foundation of these statements lies with increased achievement for all students. The implications of these statements determine what practices are not permitted, what typical school practices are congruent and can continue or be expanded, and what new practices must be initiated.

"[CLCs] have well articulated missions, beliefs and assumption statements to guide their development"

4. Standards for student attainment must be world class—of a caliber that meets or exceeds the achievement of any student in the world. Standards are benchmarked at grades 4, 8, and 12 using state standards and emerging professional association standards for achievement and performance. Standards are of two types: performance outcomes and content mastery in five core subjects of math, science, English, geography, and history, plus the arts.

"Standards for student attainment must be world class"

5. Assessment of achievement is in part embedded into daily work and evaluated through competency expectations, exhibitions, portfolios, or presentations and checked against nationally normed tests. Community input is essential in establishing exacting standards.

6. Curriculum is designed down from outcomes. Sites design powerful learning experiences that provide for development of skills, knowledge and attitudes and assist learners in achieving the standards and outcomes by choosing from a broad range of possibilities.

"Curriculum is designed down from outcomes."

7. Learning should be global in scope. The Center acts as the broker in arranging learning experiences within and beyond its walls for real-world linkages and meaning for the learner. Curriculum is defined as all the learning experiences of the learner irrespective of place, time, or person. The program and curriculum must by practice and content respect learners of all characteristics: race, gender, religion, disability, and age.

"Learning experiences are ... child-centered, experiential, life-centered, and brain-based"

8. Learning experiences are based on modern learning principles and are child-centered, experiential, life-centered, and brain-based, that is, compatible with the power of the brain to assimilate and organize learnings. A Personal Learning Plan determines each student's schedule of learning activities. Students must experience strong positive emotions about the learning and find it meaningful.

"Each learner has a Personal Learning Plan"

9. Each learner has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) in which goals, experiences to reach goals, and progress toward goals are recorded. Each learner has an advisor who meets periodically with the learner and parent to build and review the PLP. Software aids in recording the PLP goals and activities. A portfolio includes samples of student achievement.

10. Resources are reallocated to accomplish program ends. This involves allocating line item budgets differently from typical school expenditures. More is spent on instructional materials, instructional equipment, field trips, staff development, and community-based learning than in most schools. Large technology expenditures are capitalized over time. Budgets are lump-sum based and include all revenues students earn from all sources.

"Staffing is based on elevating the position of teachers to 'facilitators of learning'"

11. Staffing is based on elevating the position of teachers to "facilitators of learning" and providing a variety of support staff for specialized functions. Teacher productivity is increased with the assistance of paraprofessionals, clerks, technology specialists, community resource linkers and volunteers. Levels of teaching are compensated on the basis of responsibility, skill, productivity, and other factors.

12. Staffing includes others: parents, community resource people (citizens, seniors, business employees, agency staff) and students. All teachers agree to three fundamental roles: teaching, advising, and participating in continuous improvement, both professional and school-wide.

"Staff development occurs the equivalent of 20 to 30 days a year."

13. Staff development occurs the equivalent of 20 to 30 days a year. Staff development is based on a Professional Growth Plan each staff member maintains stating goals, strengths, areas for improvement, professional growth activities, and progress reviews. Many means of staff growth are used, including workshops, mentors, videotapes, consultations, visits, self-managing team decision making, and action research. Ultimate staff accountability for results is assured through transfer or removal from the program.

"Maximum effective use of technology empowers learners and staff"

14. Maximum effective use of technology empowers learners and staff and is used to provide learning experiences and to administrate programs. All students routinely use word processing, electronic mail, spreadsheets and databases. In addition, many use desktop publishing, graphics, music, multimedia, and other programs. Each student has frequent and regular access to use of computers, networks, and television materials and equipment.

15. Students are viewed as powerful resources, rather than as problems. When valued, students make an enormous contribution to the enterprise. They are an untapped resource and must become an integral part of staffing. Their active participation in decisions about the school and their own program contributes to their cognitive development and adds a considerable measure of deep connection. Their contributions of ideas and actions increases the pool of creative thinking for problem solving and their school service responsibilities lightens the work load for all.

"Students are viewed as powerful resources, rather than as problems"

16. Modern management principles call for decentralized decision making with accountability. Stakeholders, defined as those affected by decisions, participate in making decisions about program, staffing, and budget. Teachers and other professional educators make curriculum decisions and are accountable for student learning outcomes. Decisions are data- based and checked against outcomes and results. Program leaders guide development using transformational leadership qualities developed through training. Empowered staff and students fuel continuous progress.

Modern management calls for decentralized decision making with accountability.

17. Parents need to have crucial roles in the learning of their children and the functioning of the school. Therefore, the program vigorously involves parents in their child's education in several ways: participating in student-advisor conferences for goal setting; helping determine paths to goals; reviewing progress regularly; sharing skills and experiences; providing home-based learning reinforcement, and participating in governance.

"Parents need to have crucial roles in the learning of their children and the functioning of the school."

18. The program assists parents with the development of family learning plans including making software available for home education systems. Training for all parties is essential to making parent involvement work

19. Partnerships with other units of government, public and private agencies, early childhood programs, and post-secondary education are maximized to share community resources, reduce fragmented services and decrease duplication. Alternative service delivery systems go beyond traditional enigmatic access processes and constricted or narrow windows of service delivery. Social services are integrated with education through agreements for collaborative services and shared costs, revenues, and location. The Centers contract for services tailored to specific needs

20. Program choice is provided to students and parents. No one is required to attend or work at the Community Learning Centers. Parents and staff have a choice of conventional programs too. However, the student body must represent the pool of applicants and reflect the student racial, socio-economic, and academic makeup of the community. Outreach efforts are made to recruit under-represented groups.

21. Community Learning Centers are headquarters for lifelong formal and informal learning for the entire community. As such, they are open year round with extended hours (24 hours a day electronically, if possible). Richly stocked collections of learning materials are available on site or electronically for all ages.

"Centers de-emphasize typical double-loaded corridors of classrooms"

22. Because the facility must be congruent with the program, Community Learning Centers de-emphasize typical double-loaded corridors of classrooms and emphasize active learning environments such as media centers, production studios, discovery centers, theaters of learning, labs, community-based learning and work stations for various computer applications such as desktop publishing. The learning environment must be inviting, convivial, and accessible to the community many hours of the day. Equipment and facilities must be integrated with community based learning experiences.

"Support mechanisms must be in place to sustain change"

23. Support mechanisms must be in place to sustain change such as staff appropriateness and stability, funding stability, broad site decison-making authority, feedback on progress, and staff rewards and recognition. Attention must be paid to staff mental health to increase productivity and to avoid burnout and stress.

24. Unproductive practices, familiar as they might be in many schools, are forbidden, just as schools have eliminated older harmful practices such as paddling and using dunce caps. Schools must continuously monitor their progress and maintain momentum for continuous improvement and higher quality results. ❑

VISION OR MISSION STATEMENT

The following basic beliefs about learning govern the Community Learning Centers. These ideals furnish a foundation for building the program and procedures. These beliefs arise from successful practice and the results of decades of research.

That all learners will enjoy school every day and become highly effective and responsible citizens.

Basic Beliefs:

- Students are talented, precious and special.
- Students are eager, curious learners.
- Parents are indispensable partners.
- Staff care deeply about providing a high quality program.
- Program development means continuous improvement.
- Learning means active engagement, exploration and inquiry.
- Differences are to be prized and supported.
- Schools control the conditions for learners' successes.

Community Learning Centers are places where:

- The program is developed by all stakeholders.
- Everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher.
- Learning is marked by engagement.
- The relevance of learning is evident.
- People of all ages work together.
- Families find resources, support, and create learning plans.
- A richly stocked environment prevails.
- Standards and expectations are high.
- Everyone contributes.
- Students are a major resource.
- Everyone is prized and considered talented.
- Everyone feels empowered with all ideas valued.
- The community's deep reservoirs of talent are tapped.
- Centers operate year round and around the clock.
- Learners prepare for life in a complex, changing world.
- Teachers are organizers, arrangers, facilitators of learning.
- One-stop social services are coordinated.
- Community issues have a forum for discussion and action.
- School and community merge and use each other for learning.
- Life-centered learning is cherished.

Absolutes:

- Choice of programs is provided to staff and students.
- No one is assigned to the new program.
- Inappropriate staff are moved from the program.
- Decisions about program, staffing, and the total budget are made by program stakeholders.

Educational innovation is often short-circuited by a failure to follow up or to determine the implications of the noble statements above. Therefore, to maintain the momentum of reform efforts, Community Learning Centers are required to definitively answer the following questions:

1. What usual school practices violate belief statements and must, therefore, be discontinued?
2. What present practices support the beliefs and should be continued or extended?
3. What new practices must be initiated to support the beliefs? ❑

STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

At the Community Learning Centers, standards for student achievement must be world-class. They must compare favorably with students anywhere in the world. Students meeting such standards are expected to compete competently as workers, citizens, family members, and consumers in a complex, diverse, and rapidly-changing society.

"[S]tandards for student achievement must be world-class"

These performance expectations are based on vital bodies of knowledge, or content standards, which all students must master. Content outcomes include the academic subjects of mathematics, science, language arts, geography, history, and the arts. In addition, other content standards are being developed by professional associations, for example the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the College Board.

Performance standards, developed by states, often take the form of complex role definitions broadly stated. This project has developed a set of learning activities or tasks that, taken as a whole, provide both a curriculum and an embedded or integrated means for determining achievement. A software program tracks progress and records achievements.

"[A] set of learning activities or tasks ... provide both a curriculum and ... means for determining achievement .... A software program tracks progress and records achievement"

The linkages between standards, assessments, learning experiences, and teaching are clear. Having high quality, well-understood standards aids in the development of curriculum frameworks. While much of the work on specific world-class standards is in the beginning stages, we believe that issues of standards, outcomes, benchmarks, and assessments have vital implications for successful reform work.

Content standards describe the knowledge and processes that give students an in-depth understanding of how subject matter informs actions and beliefs. Several content outcome projects have been developed, including the College Board's *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*. Other content areas are being developed under contract with the U.S. Department of Education. Commercial packages are available, including the comprehensive "Model Curriculum and Assessment Database" (MCAD) from School Research and Service.

Developing world-class standards requires world-class programs which involve at least three important steps. First, high standards must be defined in a clear, thoughtful manner. Next, local groups should discuss, understand, and adopt the standards as their own and determine benchmarks. Finally, schools should design down from these standards to develop relevant outcomes.

"[S]chools should design down from ... [high] standards to develop relevant outcomes"

Learning Outcomes

"[O]utcomes must be explicit, meaningful and measurable to students, parents, and the community"

Learning outcomes must be explicit, meaningful and measurable to students, parents, and the community. "Explicit" means that students and parents understand the outcome and gauge their status in relation to it, knowing precisely what remains to be learned. "Meaningful" means that students and parents see the sense of the outcome, recognize it as valuable for life, and accept the challenge of accomplishing it. "Measurable" means staff, students, and parents understand criteria and assessments used to determine progress toward outcomes and know when a performance standard has been met.

Some leading thinkers on school outcomes suggest what they term "transformational" outcomes. Several states have adopted, and many others are considering, such outcomes. In addition, hundreds of school districts have adopted or are considering transformational outcomes. These take the form of complex behaviors or roles. The following five outcomes are similar to those in a number of states or school districts. These outcomes require that each student become a:

- Productive Worker
- Responsible Citizen
- Problem Solver
- Self-Directed Lifelong Learner
- Creative, Healthy Individual

These five outcomes can apply at any grade level and provide a framework for developing curriculum.

Community Learning Centers use a software program to track how major learning activities are to be conducted, including what precisely will be done, how, where, with whom, when and what learnings resulted. In addition, the software program provides assessment and evaluation of the projects with learnings tallied according to skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Learnings can be filtered through subject disciplines of math, science, history, geography, English, and arts according to the degree of presence and degree of attainment. For example, a project conducting a community survey may have a high math presence rating and a low achievement rating based on the student's handling of math components.

Principles of Assessment

"Benchmarks are used ... to transform assessment from a norm-referenced to criterion-referenced measurement."

Benchmarks are used as anchors, to set standards and to transform assessment from a norm-referenced to criterion-referenced measurement. The benchmarks are set to measure progress toward meeting both content and performance standards at grades 4, 8 and 12 to correspond to the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment levels.

To the extent that teachers and community have established high standards, clear expectations and benchmarks, assessment is embedded into performance. Transformational outcomes provide opportunities for built-in performance or competence checks. To facilitate student learning, promote effective educational programs, and communicate with parents, other educators, and the public at large about what the students are learning and how the Centers are fulfilling their mission, assessments must be used, based on the following principles:

"[A]ssessment is embedded into performance"

- They should focus on authentic, holistic, and complex performances, which demand application of knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts and focus on understanding.
- The assessment process should be an examination of both processes and products to give meaningful insights into how children learn.
- Assessments are embedded in what the teachers and students do rather than being a separate entity.
- The assessment process must be continuous and ongoing to chronicle the development and process of learning over time.
- The assessment process must reflect the complex, multi- dimensional nature of learning and classroom activities.
- Assessments must include multiple sources of information, including different kinds of tasks and instruments, as well as different perspectives on students' accomplishments.
- Evaluation of student accomplishments must be based on criteria and standards which are explicit and understood by students prior to their performance.
- Students must be involved in the assessment process. Collaborative reflection among teachers and students should be encouraged.

Triangulation of Assessment Methods

The primary mode of assessing student attainment of learning outcomes are performance-based tasks, portfolios, and demonstrations or exhibitions of competence. Community Learning Centers' staff work with individual schools to develop and implement the performance-based assessments.

CLCs' staff work with schools to develop and implement performance-based assessments

Triangulation of several assessment methods determine attainment of the benchmarked standards. Selected, critical curriculum objectives, such as the School Research and Service Corporation's "Model Curriculum and Assessment Database," are used to periodically check student progress against subject matter expectations in science, math, English, geography, history, and other areas. Each student's Personal Learning Plan offers a record of achievements and learnings.

Nationally normed tests will be used.

To understand how well students are doing in comparison to others nationally, Community Learning Centers use norm referenced tests. To the extent that they have been developed performance assessments for these tests are used. Other national tests will be used as they become available. Examples include tests developed in connection with subject areas or those used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, should they become available at the local level.

Teacher observations and judgment and student self-assessment, work samples, and performances round out the picture of student achievement. In addition, the Centers obtain valuable data for program decision making including: parent and student questionnaires; attendance and graduation rates; books read; behavior reports, and other descriptive information about a Center's functioning. ❑

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Brain-Based Learning

The educational approach is "brain compatible." This means learning accelerates with great amounts of input and mental stimulation and with many opportunities for students to learn by doing, inquiring, and discovering. Learning must be active, engaging, and immediately applicable. Brain-based learning is a systems, or systemic approach, and encompasses many practices known to advance permanent learning.

"[L]earning accelerates with great amounts of input and mental stimulation"

Brain-based learning, based on Proster Theory developed by Leslie A. Hart,[2] includes the following four basic building blocks:

1. **Patterns or understandings.** Patterns are structures in the brain that represent recognition or understanding. Patterns develop from experience, most efficiently in a rich and stimulating environment, through large amounts of input to the brain.

Most parents know this instinctively and try to provide a great variety of experiences for their child. But most classrooms with their same routines starve the brain for input, not realizing the negative effect on learning. Schools must increase variety, experiences, activities, and stimulation by an enormous factor, say ten-fold, for healthy brain development. Providing the brain with massive amounts of input is done by immersing students in issues, using real world projects, field trips, speakers, and many kinds of media. This includes cultural sensitivity and language renewal efforts to link youth to their roots and reduce ethnic alienation.

"Most parents ... try to provide a great variety of experiences for their child. But most classrooms ... starve the brain for input"

2. **Programs are the brain's instructions**, which enable one to walk or jump, to button a shirt, to solve problems, or to speak or write the word "hot." Speaking, for example, requires a massive number of instructions to facial muscles, vocal cords, and other regions of the body. Programs are learned largely through trial and error, with refinement through practice. Humans develop and deepen thousands, perhaps millions, of programs through the reinforcement of carrying out activities many times in various ways.

Programs develop by doing, action, projects, and practice. Schools must be experiential—places where students invent, try their wings, make things, exercise their thinking skills, talents, and abilities. Sitting passively in straight-row classrooms kills motivation and creates discipline problems because the brain needs challenges and opportunities to apply learning. Students must be given and assume responsibility, be encouraged to tackle new tasks, and be involved in complex interdisciplinary, life-linked projects and studies.

"[Brain] programs develop by doing, action, projects, and practice"

3. **Feedback or finding out how successful one was**. Feedback in the practical sense means learning how one did and receiving suggestions and coaching at all stages of development. This applies, not only to physical actions, but also thinking patterns, responses, and habits.

"Feedback must be immediate and helpful."

Feedback must be immediate and helpful. Most classrooms give little actual time to showing students how to improve beyond global test scores and grades. Students need coaching, suggestions, time for reflection, and peer reactions, and they need to see results of their efforts in important endeavors, such as teaching younger children.

4. **Safety and security.** "Downshifting" is a condition that occurs when the brain, under threat of danger, involuntarily shifts from a higher region of the brain to a lower (older in evolutionary time) region to prepare for fight or flight. This explains why a child needs to feel safe and secure to learn.

"The brain downshifts ... when the child is fearful."

Schools must accept the child as a precious and honored person and provide a kind, orderly, safe environment. The brain downshifts and is not at its best for learning when the child is fearful. The school must be a secure setting free from intimidation. Learning conditions must not result in apprehension, for example, of overriding failure. To do their best, students must experiences strong positive emotions about the learning. They must be able to test their skills at real tasks in a safe, non-critical environment. In such settings, children and youth accept huge challenges, but at their own pace.

A barren, impoverished, Spartan surrounding reduces input and stimulation to the brain. The brain thrives on input. Amazingly, the input does not need to be highly organized and sequenced. The brain as an enormously powerful pattern detecting device sorts even random input into patterns if provided large quantities of details, variations of situations and ample opportunities to "play" with or manipulate the material.

We observe how infants aggressively seek experiences. Their brains endeavor to establish meaning. It is equally obvious that the brain is picky about what it accepts. Material that is too remote or difficult is rejected and not processed. Already learned material runs the danger of boring the child. The child, driven by the brain, strives to understand and master the environment and to be competent.

Experiential Learning and Learning by Application

Experiential learning and learning by application engage the energy and enthusiasm of youth. Examples include community service projects, working with a mentor from the community, serving apprenticeships, preparing television or theatrical presentations, researching topics or problems, peer teaching and cross-age tutoring, coaching, adventure and challenge activities, use of technology, democratic

classroom and school organization, and a curriculum that is thematic and addresses the academic, career, cultural, and personal needs of every student.

"Learners must work on real products"

Learners must work on real products (such as newsletters or models) and services (such as teaching word processing or helping in the day care center). The entire world in all of its richness and reality must become part of the school campus and play a role in the program's learning experiences.

For learnings to register permanently in the learner:

- Learnings must be meaningful to the learner,
- New learnings must be applied immediately (in 24 hours),
- Learnings must have an emotional impact.

"Learnings must have an emotional impact."

In practice, these learning principles are interwoven. A student who researches a topic of interest and prepares a presentation probably experiences all three. The topic is of interest, hence meaningful; the student does the searching, finding, and organizing of information and presents or teaches it. The learner applies the information and experiences the thrill of accomplishment. All three principles are involved, resulting in deeper and more permanent learning.

As an example of a meaningful project, students can learn how the world works by studying their own family, community structure, and personal and social needs. In so doing, they: conduct research on their history and traditions; collect data, such as opinions through surveys and interviews; analyze census report data on family income and housing; organize information; summarize data, and report the findings.

These processes provide students with exercises in problem solving, thinking skills, information management, research methods, presentation skills, and writing competencies. They learn to examine information, draw inferences, chart or graph data, trace roots of modern issues, and prepare recommendations. The students use modern technology to manage information.

Students can use universities to see medical operations and observe advanced arts activities (dance, painting, photography, drama, music). They can study airports, transportation systems, television studios, governments, juvenile delinquency, and world events. The world in all of its complexity and variety needs to be understood by students. They gain understanding through immersion, observation, involvement, and sharing their learnings with others.

"Students can prepare for and participate in exchanges"

Students can prepare for and participate in exchanges with urban and rural schools. With the school's guidance, they write letters, research their destinations, make transportation and living arrangements and, on their return, present their experiences to the school and community.

They can manage the computer labs, video studio and production centers for use by learners of all ages. They handle maintenance, give instruction on use of equipment and materials, and provide supervision. Students can assume greater responsibility by teaching or tutoring other students and through cooperative learning, cross-age groupings, support groups, supervision of younger children, and school service projects.

"Every community is a gold mine of people, events, and activities"

Every community is a gold mine of people, events, and activities for learning. Students create databases of the deep reservoirs of talent: cooks, storytellers, trappers, clergy, doctors, miners, foresters, gardeners, travelers, hobbyists, craft artisans, business people, government agents, judges, policy analysts, clinicians, and so on. Such resources are the sparks of reality that bring life to topics being studied.

The topics of interest to youth are endless. In each project they receive training in skills such as interviewing and notetaking. Teacher planning organizes the learning of enormous amounts of history, geography, literature, math, and science content in the context of community learning projects.

Profound implications flow from these imperatives and staff must be trained to distinguish those teaching and learning practices that are brain compatible.

Learner-Centered Approach

This learner-centered approach involves attention to student interests and learning styles. Content is made meaningful when students are involved in goal setting, determining paths to reaching goals, and appraising progress toward goals. Students with parents and faculty help design a Personal Learning Plan. This develops ownership and understanding of the learning process by students, teachers, and parents. Goals stated in the form of realistic and useful outcomes or results heighten motivation, energy, and commitment by students. Most former "problem" students, when viewed through the youth-as-resource paradigm, exhibit totally different behaviors and became successful learners. Diversity among learners becomes an opportunity, not a problem.

"Diversity among learners becomes an opportunity, not a problem."

"The role of the teacher must be that of collaborator and team leader and guide, rather than boss"

The role of the teacher must be that of collaborator and team leader and guide, rather than boss. The teacher monitors the academic and social growth of students, leading each into new areas of understanding and competence.

"[Governmental] requirements must be seen as a 'floor,' not a 'ceiling'"

Academic integrity of the work must be absolutely clear. Rather than subverting or skirting any state-mandated skills and content list, the more appropriate response must be to accept that agenda and go beyond its normally narrow confines. In the words of many members of the reform movement, requirements must be seen as a "floor," not a "ceiling." Texts must be regarded as reference works to be used when needed and as appropriate.

Curriculum

James Coleman, professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago, points out that for youth growing up in 1900, society was information poor but responsibility rich. There were few newspapers and magazines and no television or radio, but youth had many chores and duties. Today's society for youth, is the opposite: information rich, but responsibility poor. People are flooded with media and data but youth have few responsibilities that clearly, visibly, and immediately benefit the well-being of their family or community. School programs must act on this change or they risk becoming increasingly irrelevant to youth and to the needs of society.

"Today's society, for youth, is ... information rich, but responsibility poor."

Curriculum in traditional schools is based on mastering courses and textbook material—an uninteresting activity for students and an ineffective instructional strategy. The Community Learning Center program replaces the traditional school's separate subjects approach. It uses what is meaningful in the present program, but then creates a new program rather than trying to tune up or fix the existing program.

Curriculum consists of learnings in: content areas such as geography, literature, or science; skills such as writing, computation, and problem solving, and values or beliefs, such as respecting others and doing one's best. Curriculum isn't just those experiences controlled by the school. It's all experiences of the student irrespective of time, place, or people. Education takes place in and out of school buildings, during and outside of school hours, from teachers and others. Centers are nondiscriminatory and recognize the power and educational value of family experiences, television, the grocer, clergy, playing, and other persons and activities in the student's life. The advisor, parent, and child consider all experiences in building a program.

Community Learning Centers employ a new conception of curriculum that has emerged in education research. This curriculum based on outcomes (often known as transformational outcomes) has the power to transform learning and the school. Instead of isolated courses and objectives, parents and employers want results, hence the term outcome-based education or results-based education. The controversy around OBE involves flawed understanding and mismanaged implementation.

"[After] arriving at a consensus about the skills, knowledge and values children and youth should have ... learning tasks are designed to achieve the outcomes."

A two-step process provides the approach:

1) Obtain agreement on the outcomes, and

2) Arrange learning experiences or activities that achieve those outcomes and, when attained, help assure a successful and effective life. This means arriving at a consensus about the skills, knowledge and values children and youth should have. Then a series of learning tasks are designed to achieve the outcomes.

Personal Learning Plan

With parents and the student's advisor, students complete forms that list goals, outcomes, activities to reach goals (including the who, what, when, where, and how), periodic progress, and specific learnings. These are recorded in the student's Personal Learning Plan.

"A student's program is based on achieving high levels of performance toward transformational outcomes."

A student's program is based on achieving high levels of performance toward transformational outcomes. Where assessments indicate unacceptable levels of achievement of content and skill outcomes, the program is modified to increase activity aimed at improving the weak areas. For example, take a case of weak writing skills. Imagine that the student's program includes working in the day care part of the day and preparing a stage performance another part of the day. The advisor and learning facilitator could adjust the program to include more writing, more time writing in a journal each day with review by a staff member, work on a computer program learning capitalization and punctuation, and a short course on writing. Each of these would be based on the student's needs and learning style.

"[E]ach student's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is maintained with a software program ... [and] used to catalog progress"

For ease of access, record keeping, printing records, and revision, each student's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is maintained with a software program. The program is used to catalog progress toward performance and content outcomes.

The PLP yields important information about the child's progress toward performance and content outcomes. Results of assessments indicate strengths and weaknesses. As students work on projects alone or in groups, skill and knowledge deficiencies become obvious to the student and staff members associated with the project.

For example, if several students create maps of the community, they might explore what types of maps exist and what maps they might prepare. Most students would not know where to turn for this information. A staff member can suggest various sources. Even that task will seem daunting to many students who have not used reference books, the telephone, databases, or interviews for such a purpose.

That's when instruction, coaching, suggestions, and practice is provided by an instructor, community member, a more experienced student, a self-instructional manual, a computer program, self-study program, etc. Upon receiving certain maps, students may not know how to read them. Again, in the context of need, instruction is provided. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of skills are learned quickly, permanently, and naturally—another example of brain-based learning. As students accumulate hundreds of project experiences, their knowledge and skill base grows rapidly and feeds upon itself in a cumulative fashion.

Knowledge and Skill Base

All students must have skills so they can enter the job market or to help support themselves while pursuing further learning. General work habits and skills must be learned while in school. These include responsibility, initiative, basic academic skills, and problem solving. The report of the 1993 Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills provides an excellent list, including:

A Three-Part Foundation–

- Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks
- Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons
- Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty

and Five Competencies–

- Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources including time, money, materials/facilities, and human resources
- Interpersonal: Works with others, teaches others, exercises leadership, works with diversity
- Information: Acquires, evaluates, interprets and uses information
- Systems: Understands complex social, organizational, and technological systems
- Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

After extensive study of skills needed for today's skilled job market, Dr. Willard Daggett of the International Center for Leadership in Education devised the following list of "Technical Skills for the 21st Century":

- ✓ Technical writing and reading
- ✓ Keyboarding
- ✓ Problem solving and decision making
- ✓ Resource management
- ✓ Work economics
- ✓ Human relations
- ✓ Applied math: statistics, probabilities, measurement systems
- ✓ Career planning
- ✓ Logic
- ✓ Applied physics

Students learn many of these skills in the normal course of the results-based curriculum. Other skills, particular to a field, can be developed through mentorships, apprenticeships, and internships. All students must spend time in work settings to gain perspective on what adults do and on the importance of basic skills, quality work, productivity, and appropriate attitudes.

"All student must have skills, so they can enter the job market or to help support themselves while pursuing further learning"

The Advisor

"Thorough and ongoing training of staff in the Advisor-Advisee system must be provided."

The success of the entire program resides fundamentally on how well advisors do their work.

Thorough and ongoing training of staff in the Advisor-Advisee system must be provided. Many schools have established advisor programs, but have fallen far short of their potential by not maintaining a quality training program and following through with all aspects.

"The advisor must be able to plan with students rather than for them"

The advisor is an educational broker, a combination friend, helper, guide, counselor, suggester, appraiser, record keeper, facilitator, expediter, and arranger. The advisor must be able to plan with students rather than for them, to help the student grow in all areas—intellectual, social, physical, etc.—and to develop talents and uniqueness.

The advisor is a specialist in the growth and development of young people and helps parents interpret the value of the child's experiences. It is the advisor's task to think hard about each advisee and to develop with the parents the best possible approaches for fostering the student's full potential. ❑

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Necessity for Intense Development

Training is essential in all organizations to stay up-to-date on knowledge and to hone skills. Because of their impact on students, Community Learning Centers must be world-class. This means a substantial amount of staff development, since the program departs significantly from old patterns of education. Staff development takes many forms beyond the traditional (and low impact) mode of a large group presentation to the school faculty.

"Staff development takes many forms beyond the traditional"

Community Learning Centers require intense amounts of effective staff development. The school design represents such a different paradigm that traditionally trained staff are unable to implement the design without acquiring different mindsets and skills. Staff must participate in training on an on-going basis, with follow-up coaching and data-driven feedback, to discern their progress and to determine what remains to be done to achieve the full program design.

The dominant teaching paradigm is an enormous hurdle. Teachers grow up in a system of schooling that is much the same everywhere. Courses, textbooks, and teaching methods are surprisingly similar across the United States in public and private schools. Teachers are trained, often urged, to depart from traditional practices that are dysfunctional for many children and youth. However, teachers are quickly socialized into the dominant system and discouraged from adopting progressive teaching practices by institutional traditions.

"The dominant teaching paradigm is an enormous hurdle."

Virtually the entire literature on teaching methods and curriculum urges a more meaningful, progressive approach. But systems, whether in education or other spheres of life and work, don't change easily. A look at the teachers' edition of traditional textbooks reveals many experiential activities to conduct with students. Yet few teachers use those suggestions because of time factors and because school philosophies emphasize recitation and seat work.

The paucity of staff development and training is well documented. Most schools schedule only about five days a year which is seriously inadequate to the task of transforming schools, particularly where high staff turnover occurs.

Most teachers, moreover, teach subjects discretely and in isolation from life because they don't believe they have an option. As a result, they face too many students per day, struggle to cover the curriculum and, in the end, battle student apathy and disinterest in such traditional topics as Silas Marner, the life of the ancient Mesopotamians, and other content that seems utterly irrelevant to the students' lives.

"Most teachers ... teach subjects discretely and in isolation from life because they don't believe they have an option."

"Select and employ a cadre of top teachers .... Transfer non-performers out."

"Provide continuous, on-going follow-up of the training"

The challenge of training staff in better ways of organizing and delivering learning must cope with the realities of life in schools. The approach is three-pronged:

1. Select and employ a cadre of top teachers who already subscribe to the approach and who work as Facilitators of Learning. Transfer non-performers out.
2. Provide ample effective training—about 20 to 30 days a year for the entire staff.
3. Provide continuous, ongoing follow-up of the training, monitor performance, and collect data for feedback and coaching.

Almost no school does more than one of these; hence the failure of schools to change.

Training Formats

Trainings take many forms. Some are delivered by specialists, for example: a workshop on establishing brain based learning. Others are arranged at various stages of readiness of participants, for example: advisor program, cooperative learning, and Personal Learning Plan software. Self-directed team sessions provide opportunities for creative problem solving. Much self-study is expected of staff using print materials and video. Visits to other programs and schools, conferences, seminars, workshops, professional journals, curriculum development, and courses provide valuable staff development experiences.

"Each staff member maintains a Professional Growth Plan as a condition of employment"

Staff training must be thorough and on-going at the rate of 20 to 30 days a year, forever. Each staff member maintains a Professional Growth Plan as a condition of employment and as a means of assuring an orderly progression of increasing competence. The Professional Growth Plan includes an assessment of strengths, areas for improvement, short and long term goals, plans for accomplishing goals, a timeline for accomplishing goals, and provisions for periodic progress review sessions. The school's stakeholders (staff, parents, students, and community members) help evaluate all staff annually.

Staff training in a new skill area is not learned as a result of one presentation at a training session. Research shows a low adoption rate of new practices, even given excellent training. However, immediate follow-up with staff increases adoption of new practices dramatically. This includes observing the staff using a new practice, providing suggestions, reflecting with the staff and coaching for increased skill.

Areas of Training

Areas of staff development include:

- Establishing an understanding of brain-compatible learning.
- Bridging from theory to practice.
- Knowing what types of educational experiences satisfy the criteria of modern principles of learning and brain-compatible theory of human mental growth.

- Training in how to use outcome-based learning processes to organize curriculum experiences, record student learnings, and help students develop learning schedules. This includes a high comfort level with and the ability to employ technology.
- Training to be an effective advisor—the central role needed in schools.
- Understanding and using technology extensively for learning, both to provide learning activities and as a powerful tool for the students.
- Attention to staff mental health, by assisting staff with present or past personal trauma. Staff who wrestle with unresolved abuse and fear, whether job related or not, typically experience problems of low morale, accidents, absences, and lower productivity. Enlightened companies work diligently to achieve healthy conditions of dignity, meaning, and community. Further, they provide substantive pro-active programs for fulfilling personal and family functioning for employees. Because of the sensitivity of these issues, a careful survey of needs and appropriate programs must be devised.

Other critical areas of staff development, include:

- ✓ Planning with students
- ✓ Working with parents
- ✓ Integrated social services
- ✓ Decentralized decision making
- ✓ Using the community for learning
- ✓ Multicultural, gender-fair curriculum
- ✓ School development
- ✓ Cooperative learning
- ✓ Supervising helpers
- ✓ Reallocating resources
- ✓ Transition to work
- ✓ Student management ❑

TECHNOLOGY

Schools still are in the print age, while students and the world have moved rapidly to the electronic age. This disjuncture creates serious problems for teachers struggling to maintain student engagement. Even worse, problems befall graduates upon entering the world of word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and multimedia work stations where jobs go to those comfortable with such tools.

"Schools still are in the print age, while students and the world have moved rapidly to the electronic age."

Just as the right tool in the hands of carpenter multiples productivity and quality of work, students and staff must be empowered with modern tools to multiply learning, increase productivity, and reduce tedious and repetitious actions. In addition, tools like desktop publishing, graphics programs, music software, and computer-aided design provide for the flowering of talents and abilities.

Funding and Budget Reallocation

Instructional equipment and materials are not one-time purchases nor it is necessary to pay for all of it within one budget year. A huge initial investment can be capitalized over its useful life, three to five years for example. This reduces the initial expenditure by a factor of approximately two-thirds. Maintenance costs, replacement costs, and new products and software must also be included.

Because typical school budgets are tied up in personnel—often 90 percent—reallocation of budget items must of necessity reduce the percentage for personnel. An exciting school with engaged students needs fewer teachers spending major portions of time monitoring assignments and behavior. Students assume important responsibilities in teaching and school operations, not for the goal of saving money, though that occurs, but to gain valuable learning experiences—experiences that schools usually deny youth in the mistaken assumption that those activities carry little learning significance.

"[R]eallocation of budget items must of necessity reduce the percentage for personnel"

Schools must acquire at least $1,000,000 of instructional equipment. This will purchase, for example, computer labs, a television studio, a short-wave radio station, an electronic response classroom, a publishing center, take home laptop computers, drama equipment, science lab equipment, and telecommunications equipment. To do this with usual school budgets requires proceeding differently:

- Fewer staff can be funded.
- Equipment is capitalized over time so that the cost doesn't fall entirely in one year's budget.
- Leasing, renting, bonding or time payments provide means for spreading costs over the life of equipment.

Technologically-Enriched Environments

In addition to instructional uses, technology must be used for administrative purposes, including record keeping, Personal Learning Plans, scheduling, resource management, office work, external and internal communications, maintenance, purchasing, accounting, and payrolls. The quality of software programs today offers efficiency and productivity once the learning curve has been scaled.

"New technologies ... must be integrated with all aspects of operations."

The Community Learning Centers design calls for technologically-enriched environments. New technologies (new for most schools) must be integrated with all aspects of operations because they enable quantum leaps in the productivity of stakeholders. "High tech" enables more effective "high touch" interactions between staff and learners.

Each site carefully assesses the specific needs of its learners and its community to determine the optimal combination of technologies. In addition to providing accurate and accessible records about students, software programs support a personalized learning plan for each student that tracks goals, suggests paths to goals, identifies a vast range of resources, and provides for periodic reviews of progress.

"Take-home or home-based technologies break down classroom walls"

Video and multi-media resources provide a rapidly growing base of learning resources that bring topics to life in a way that textbook exercises and work sheets cannot. Take-home or home-based technologies break down classroom walls and implicit assumptions about teachers controlling every aspect of the learning process. Technology can increase learning for the student at home and the rest of the family can benefit as well.

"All learners use modern technology routinely to intensify learning and multiply productivity."

All learners use modern technology routinely to intensify learning and multiply productivity. This includes programs for word processing, spreadsheets, databases, E- mail, voice mail, distance learning, remote access, drawing and design, multimedia, simulations, drill and practice, music, and video. With minimal instruction, sometimes delivered by another student, all students learn to use these tools as naturally as people now use telephones and calculators. Such programs make:

- writing more abundant and correct,
- math and statistical analysis readily available for application,
- information on all subjects accessible for scrutiny and synthesis, and
- give talents the opportunity to thrive.

To enable dramatic gains in learning, learners are empowered through extraordinary (for schools) technology. Students use desktop publishing to create newsletters and multi-media resources to create audio-visual reports to the community about issues of concern. Learners use national and international electronic mail with pen pals from different cultures and seek information from references on CD ROMs, the Internet, and remote databases.

Reallocation of Staff

Education, today, is still too labor intensive—much like agriculture was in 1890. While education is a people-intensive activity, a correction must be made to provide powerful tools for learning. Maximum effective use of technology makes possible efficient reallocation of staff resources. There would be an essential core of the most expensive people—experienced teachers—elevated in status to facilitators of learning. The reallocated dollars would train and employ a greater number of paraprofessionals and provide for technology. Instead of being equipment poor, students and teachers must be empowered with modern technology. This is the equivalent of capitalizing employees in business to increase productivity.

"Education, today, is still too labor intensive"

"[R]eallocated dollars would train and employ a greater number of paraprofessionals and provide for technology"

Access and Education

In addition, changes in learning environments are necessary for the potential of educational technologies to be tapped. The two major issues are access and education. Each teaching area should be equipped with a networked computer, telephone, modem, video capabilities, projection system, and necessary peripheral devices. Staff and students must have access to the tools they need to do their work.

Effective and ongoing training and development for staff and student is required to effectively integrate new technologies. On-site support is another critical need. In planning, technology and learning must be brought to the same "table" so that the technology supports and advances learning goals. Hardware and software decisions involve those in teaching and learning at the school site. Resident experts helps teachers integrate technologies into practice.

"Effective and ongoing training and development ... is required to effectively integrate new technologies"

Each Community Learning Center is encouraged:

- to utilize existing technology in innovative ways;
- seek to implement technology to further cognitive and educational growth in students;
- to facilitate an efficient, comprehensive environment for learning; and
- to break the mold in implementing innovative, challenging technological tools.

At Community Learning Centers, we expect to see:

- A computer on every teacher's desk and used by the teacher for record keeping, report generation, electronic communications, and other efficient technological functions.
- Several individual work stations in each student work area, fully equipped with productivity tools for student use including word processing, spreadsheet, desktop publishing, graphics software and whatever instructional software is assigned or appropriate.

- An on-going review of currently owned software and to-be-acquired software with the intent of retaining only that which is of sound educational quality and adds to the educational environment. It is particularly important to obtain and retain software that provides material, information, and experiences that are unique and make maximum use of the technology. Specific emphasis should be placed on simulation software, decision-making and problem-solving software, and cooperative group-designed software.
- A multimedia station present in each classroom or student work area, fully equipped with a projection panel or large screen monitor for group presentations, a regular monitor for individual work, a video disk player, CD-ROM drive, and audio speakers. It should also be equipped with a microphone and perhaps a scanner or digitizing camera and card to serve as a multimedia student productivity station.
- A library of quality multimedia resources for use as references in report writing available in a central location or via a server to each classroom or student work area. In addition, on-line databases of reference material should be available for research. This includes encyclopedias, almanacs, news collections, and other reference materials available in CD-ROM and/or videodisk. As mentioned earlier, the information stations should include or be adjacent to a word-processing station for note taking. In addition, resource stations should be established in a conference-type area for collaborative group work.

At the CLCs, we expect to see each student with access to a notebook computer that can connect with the network at school and via modem from the home to access on-line resources.

- Each student has access to an individual student notebook computer on which to take notes and do assignments. The notebook can connect with the network at school and via modem from the home to access on-line resources. This concept seems innovative, but is likely to be as common within the next decade as individual student calculators are today.
- An electronic classroom enabling each student to respond giving the teacher knowledge of the student's understanding of what is being taught.

There will be an emphasis on student use of technology as a tool for creativity, cognitive growth, and interaction"

- An emphasis on student use of technology as a tool for creativity, cognitive growth, and interaction. Students must learn to use computer technology to access resources on-line or via software, to prepare reports and do desktop publishing, to manipulate numbers and prepare graphs and charts, to create multimedia presentations and decision-making expert systems, and to communicate with others.

On- Site Technology

The site technology planning process lays out implementation strategies for the following:

- Computers available for each learner (at least 50% portables) equipped with
- General personal productivity tools (database, spreadsheet, word processing, etc.)

- Local electronic-mail and schedule-management software
- Modem dial-up and/or direct connection to local network
- Appropriate input/output devices for disabled learners
- Specialized work stations
  - ✓ Media-oriented for learner projects and activities (including scanners, science lab instrumentation; video production, desktop publishing, music synthesizing and recording, and computer-aided design hardware and software; CD/DVI optical media resources)
  - ✓ Learner support (instructional management) work stations
  - ✓ Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development system (e.g. pre-assessment, goal setting, identifying learning resources, scheduling activities)
  - ✓ Learner information system (e.g. demographic data)
  - ✓ Learning assessment system (e.g. projects, performances, portfolio evaluations, record keeping)
- Local networking providing
  - ✓ Support for Apple and IBM platform through cost-effective network and cabling typologies (ethernet, fiber, etc.)
  - ✓ High capacity connectability with other CLC sites (for Internet-like abilities)
  - ✓ Internet connectability (E-mail, network news, file transfer, data access, and remote log-in via Telnet)
  - ✓ Satellite and/or cable TV connectability (data, programs, and other resources)
  - ✓ Controlled access to commercial database services (e.g. Dialog)
  - ✓ Fax sending and receiving
  - ✓ File sharing
  - ✓ Dial-in connection (for 24-hour/day access to learning resources)
  - ✓ Local E-mail and schedule management
  - ✓ Application program sharing (including software for instruction, authoring, presentation, project management)
  - ✓ Printer sharing
  - ✓ Learning resources DB sharing (including CD, video disc, print, and community resources such as mentors, libraries, museums, etc.)
  - ✓ Options that may be integrated into the network or may stand alone
  - ✓ Telephone, voice-mail system
  - ✓ Teleconferencing, two-way video and audio systems
  - ✓ Facilitator managed, "groupware," and meeting management systems
- Service and support system for site hardware and software
  - ✓ Training and hot-line answers for users and tech oriented user-helpers
  - ✓ Training and hot-line answers for central site technical systems manager
  - ✓ Generous on-site warranties and/or maintenance agreements
  - ✓ Capability for remote problem determination and resolution
  - ✓ Documented procedures for on-going systems development and implementation, problem determination and resolution (including explanation of user, helper, technical manager, vendor roles)

"Computers available for each learner"

"Modem dial-up and/or direct connection to local network"

- Other learning technologies
  - ✓ Telephones (with voice mail) easily accessible for staff and students
  - ✓ Video cameras, VCR recorders and players, video disk players
  - ✓ Overhead displays and LCD or video projection equipment
  - ✓ Calculators, poster makers, specialized cameras

"[T]echnology is an integral, not supplemental, part of the learning environment"

The Community Learning Center model is one in which technology is an integral, not supplemental, part of the learning environment; where a balance of structure and student empowerment exists, and where students are encouraged to discover interests and pursue expertise. The Center aims to cognitively challenge and "grow" each member of the community, with technology as a tool for reaching beyond the traditional resources of the school and for enabling learners to create new and fantastic results. Learning, after all, is the reason for being. ❑

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

A New Model for Staffing

The paradigm shift that the Community Learning Centers represent can be accomplished if the right staff are in place. This means a small core of highly trained, highly motivated, and dedicated teachers. Such teachers already exist, but are often unappreciated in schools which are not involved in advanced practices of education. These teachers must be recruited to organize powerful learning experiences. They must be given relief from the overburden of tasks requiring less expertise. Paraprofessionals can accomplish many duties that teachers now perform and that currently take them away from more direct, high skill teaching tasks. The budget must reallocate funds to support the differentiated staffing model so that more adults are available to implement the program.

"[P]aradigm shift ... can be accomplished if the right staff are in place."

Because the personnel budget of Community Learning Centers is similar to, or smaller than, other schools (because of reallocating resources to other educational costs), an alternative staffing model must be devised. The student-to-teacher ratio must increase to accommodate employing other personnel. This means increasing the ratio from 1.5 to 2 times normal. Money released by having fewer professional teachers can be allocated for various specialists to assist the teachers. Teachers become facilitators of learning and supervisors of a team, a higher responsibility position than teachers in most traditional schools.

"[A]n alternative staffing model must be devised. The student-to-teacher ratio must increase to accommodate employing other personnel."

Teachers in this program must be top professionals, experts about learning, and managers of learning systems. Assistants handle many functions and assignments essential to the learning process, but they require less training and experience than the professional teacher. Compensation can be adjusted on the basis of experience, productivity, and responsibility (including such factors as teaching, advising, participation in school improvement, organizing curriculum, and staff development), skill (such factors in teaching as content knowledge, application of learning principles, teaching methods, and relationships) and results (such factors as learning, engagement of learners, and success with all students).

Probably the greatest shift in staffing occurs when students, parents, and volunteers are accepted for participation in delivering instruction under teacher supervision. Students are an essential and untapped resource and must become an integral part of staffing, assisting in many functions of the school. For a more complete discussion of this idea, see "Students as Resources" under the "Other Design Elements" section of this document. Certainly, schools have moved toward students helping other students learn through such programs as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, companion reading, peer counseling and cross-age grouping.

"Probably the greatest shift in staffing occurs when students, parents, and volunteers are accepted for participation"

"Schools must recognize the deep reservoirs of talent in their communities"

Schools must recognize the deep reservoirs of talent in their communities and how community people can make important contributions to student learning. Schools must survey their communities for parents, business people, nearby residents, and students who can volunteer their services or who can be contracted with for services. These valuable resource source people must be inventoried and catalogued using a database for easy access. One business surveyed their 200 employees and found more than 1,000 entries for knowledge or experience in 40 categories.

"A core staff of administrators and facilitators of learning make up the heart of the professional employees."

Community Learning Centers require a new model of staffing to provide for the immediate future and for long-term stability. A core staff of administrators and facilitators of learning make up the heart of the professional employees. This core of staff members receive a high degree of training to install and implement the program. They supervise a larger number of staff who conduct various aspects of the program. Because of the investment in and responsibility of the core staff, turnover must be very low. Their compensation must be very competitive with public school systems both at the beginning and the top of the schedule.

Tiered Salaries and Responsibilities

"Salary tiers are based on degree of responsibility for the program, experience, training, and productivity."

Salary tiers are based on degree of responsibility for the program, experience, training, and productivity. A differentiated staffing model extends present staffing patterns. We suggest several levels of compensation for instructional staff: Administration, Learning Facilitators, Teachers, Specialists (e.g. technology), and Teaching Assistants.

The highest level of teacher is as a Learning Facilitator. These staff members are experts about learning. They arrange, organize, and orchestrate learning experiences. They remove barriers to learning. They direct the remainder of the staff in the mission of a learning community.

Learning Facilitators are licensed teachers who must be compensated well enough to ensure their continuation with the school. This means competitive salaries for this small group. The same is true for administrators. Teachers are employed on a student-teacher ratio of between 30 and 40 to 1. This is above normal ratios because differentiated staffing involves others in teaching and tutoring relationships. The others include specialists, teaching assistants, elders, volunteers, parents, mentors, business people, agency personnel, and, most important of all, students.

Included in these staff are part-time employees and contracts with firms to provide services. Contracted services may involve delivering aspects of the educational program as well as other services, such as transportation and food services. Contracted services build in flexibility. In contrast to hiring full-time employees, contracts are for just the amount of service necessary. Contract control remains with the Center, so specifications are written to match needs and renewal is based on

needs and performance. Part-time staff enable the program to hire the exact number of staff needed for a particular service.

The school must comply with federal and state mandates for special education students. The program serves these students in a rich regular education learning environment in almost all cases. This means less labeling, separation, and drill in workbooks. All students work together using real life issues and activities. They help each other using one another's strengths. In this way, special education students are helped and help each other. A licensed special education teacher oversees the program, evaluates its progress, and facilitates its services.

"All students work together using real life issues and activities. They help each other using one another's strengths."

Included as junior staff are students. They comprise the greatest under-utilized resource in schools. They must be involved in all aspects of the school's operations not as much because their contributions are necessary, but more because such school experiences amplify their growth and celebrate their contributions. Each person contributes and knows that the organization is the better for it. No one simply takes. Even more important is that the work of the school is of interest to students. Through their participation, they learn about how organizations function.

"[Students] comprise the greatest under-utilized resource in schools."

Students help with teaching, tutoring, operating educational technology, touring visitors, peer counseling, devising public information materials, building maintenance, program decision making, discipline, hiring and evaluation of personnel, and every aspect of school operations. None of these are an interruption of the students' education, but are in and of themselves educational and, as such, are not to be denied the participation of youth. Each student learns that the organization functions better for his or her contribution to the whole.

"Each person contributes and knows that the organization is the better for it. No one simply takes."

Parents and extended family members are invited to participate as adjunct staff for, indeed, they are crucial learning advisors and teachers to their children. A Family Learning Plan is recommended in which shared plans and learning activities are set in a framework of who, what, where, when, and how. Senior citizens particularly have extraordinary gifts to share from their experience and wisdom.

Staff Functions

The staff must fulfill three major functions:

1. **Direct and indirect teaching**. Most teaching staff have always accepted this role. Community Learning Centers require that all personnel consider themselves teachers in some capacity.
2. **Advising students**. Advisory groups must be small and therefore, virtually all staff must advise a small group of students as one of the most important functions of being a staff member.
3. **School improvement**. All staff work for continuous improvement toward excellence. This requires the collective wisdom and combined perspectives of all.

"[T]he "right" staff ranks as the most important ingredient for a successful school"

Selecting the "right" staff ranks as the most important ingredient for a successful school. An inadequate staff will botch an excellent program; a great staff will make even a poor design work. This is especially true for new or progressive schools which are always "on trial."

The staff member needs to be a facilitator of learning, a guide, a friend, an advocate, an arranger, and an orchestrator. These key roles encompass teaching, advising, and participating in a continuously improving organization. Doing just one or two won't suffice. Staff manage decision-making processes rather than making decisions unilaterally. They follow up on decisions and see that others carry out their end of the bargain.

Site Management and Shared Governance

"School-based shared decision making .... involves [all] the school's stakeholders"

School-based shared decision making, a form of school district organization, makes the individual Center the unit where decision making about the educational program takes place. The process of decision making involves the school's stakeholders (principal, teachers, other school staff, parents, students, and sometimes other community members) as participants in shaping the program.

A variety of terms are used in the literature and by school districts for school-based shared decision making. These include: school-based management, school site management, and school-centered decision making in which those closest to the implementation of a decision are involved in making the decision and that doing so contributes to stronger, better and more easily implemented decisions.

The concept of school-based shared decision making arose during the past two decades partially as a result of changing management science. Businesses are moving toward decentralization, delegation of authority and flattening the management hierarchy. Japan attracted widespread attention with "quality circles," in which workers even at the lowest level were involved in decisions about how to make products better and more efficiently. Increasingly, employees at all levels participate in decisions about their work. Their ideas help accomplish work more efficiently and improve its quality.

"School-based decision making defines the individual school as the critical unit for educational change."

Schools must elicit every ounce of intelligence from all possible sources to meet today's educational challenges.

School-based decision making defines the individual school as the critical unit for educational change. Shared decision making assumes that stakeholder participation improves the precision of school actions. The following rationale for school-based shared decision making provides a potent base for adopting the practice:

- **Participants feel empowered and energized in schools where they help make important professional decisions**. Empowerment elicits people's resourcefulness and ingenuity. Shared decision making evokes a strong sense of pride to produce the best education program possible, it fuels tremendous progress. When participants are part of decisions, they develop a commitment to seeing their ideas work.

"Shared decision making ... fuels tremendous progress."

- **People vested in decisions try harder to make their ideas work.** They are more willing to be accountable for the results and to rework the decision if it doesn't produce the expected outcomes.

- **Decisions made at the point of action are better tailored to an individual school's situation** than decisions made to apply uniformly to many schools. Locally-designed decisions can be school-sensitive and quickly modified to meet changing conditions.

- As students, parents and other community members participate in school decisions, **partnerships of caring and resource sharing develop**. Home-school partnerships greatly increase school success for students.

- **Participants in decision making come to appreciate the complexities of educating diverse populations of youth.** They become more inclined to help and less inclined to blame.

"Participants in decision making ... become more inclined to help and less inclined to blame."

- Few school districts extend decentralized decision making into schools beyond permission to decide the instructional materials and equipment budget. This represents about five percent of the total budget of a school. **School-based decision making means school control of the entire budget.**

- When a school district decentralizes decisions to school sites, the crucial issue arises as to which parties will be involved in making decisions. School-based management doesn't ensure parental or student participation. It is possible, that just the principal and perhaps the teachers will decide budget, staffing, and curriculum matters. However, others vying for a role in decision making include non-professional staff, parents, other community members and students. They may not be standing in line, accustomed as they are to being left out, but a serious mistake is made if they are omitted.

- **Site decision making must involve all stakeholders to complete the equation for school improvement.** Parents, students and other interested community members need to participate in determining policy, the type of program, learning outcomes, major budget categories, and staffing configurations. This doesn't mean micro-management. Stakeholders need training in their proper roles and procedures. ❑

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

One of the continuing dilemmas for educators in traditional systems is accessing needed services for children who continue to struggle in classrooms, not because of the lack of ability, but because of a lack of nurturance, lack of nutrition, lack of consistent support at home, family problems (unemployment, chemical use or abuse) and other difficulties. Standard, fragmented approaches have not been effective in tackling the tough issues affecting children's lives and well-being. Social service providers, government agencies, nonprofit organizations providing services to children and families have taken but a few steps toward addressing these issues, often without involving schools.

Integration of Services

Integration of social services has been in vogue in some communities in the last few years. One elementary school in Minneapolis has co-located programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters in the school building. However progressive this may seem, the real challenge goes beyond physical presence and access. Even the most successful efforts at co-location cannot assure access, information sharing, and true participation.

"Even the most successful efforts at co-location cannot assure access, information sharing and true participation."

Ironically, traditional middle-class families take advantage of service integration more than those who may have a greater need. Focus groups of parents, service providers, and community members representing unserved and under-served populations have expressed anger over the lack of sensitivity of existing systems.

Parents and community members want an active role in determining what services are needed and how those services should be delivered. Some communities of color consider the notion of integration of psychological and counseling services intrusive and disrespectful. They express concern about confidentiality and misuse of information. Other communities are comfortable with these services being provided through the school even to the point of surrendering decision making to the staff and service experts.

"Parents and community members want an active role in determining what services are needed and how those services should be delivered."

Community Learning Centers must promote and support a new paradigm for service integration and delivery. Each site engages social service partners sharing a vision of child-centered, child-focused services respectful and supportive of the families and cultures. Sites approachs service integration with these criteria:

- Service integration partners must share CLC values.
- Service integration partners must work cooperatively to design services that include family orientation and respect for culture as well as developing new paradigms for service delivery.
- Services must involve a more holistic family-based strategy as the foundation. Family may be "redefined" or individually defined for each child.

All services contracted or accessed through Centers are required:

- to emphasize strengths, not deficiencies;
- to change the concept of client to customer;
- to move to a valued partner orientation;
- to eliminate duplication of services;
- to use pro-active rather than reactive approaches;
- to work to achieve universal, not single-targeted services, and
- to honor families' culture, heritage, language and ethnicity.

"Most services have been at best consultative—exchanging information periodically and reactively"

Service providers must work toward greater collaboration. Most services have been at best consultative—exchanging information periodically and often only reactively when a major incident or transition occurs for the student. Coordinated services can remove duplication, uncomplicated processes for families and students and involve clients as full partners in the development and delivery of services.

"Coordinated services ... involve clients as full partners in the development and delivery of services."

Collaborative Efforts

Co-location provides a physical basis for integrating services. But to efficiently and effectively address the needs of the whole child, the integrated services partners must agree to move toward more cooperation and collaboration. Partners must engage in joint decision making with incentives for information sharing. Shared purpose and shared resources connect the partners in new ways and support the process as one of the products.

"As staff and service providers learn from one another ... system boundaries begin to blur to the benefit of children and families."

Collaborative efforts result in joint training and information exchanges with staff and volunteers at CLC sites. As staff and service providers learn from one another and model for one another, system boundaries begin to blur to the benefit of children and families. Sharing of information leads to sharing of perspectives and ideas for improving access and options for children and families. Involvement of key stakeholders in service selection result in approaches that are respectful and inclusive. Choice and empowerment guide selection of services and enhance a learner's and a family's ability to self-select the most appropriate and relevant services.

The new vision is a child-centered, child-focused service delivery system as opposed to an institutionally focused approach that works to preserve the existing paradigms and procedures. Home services are contracted to meet distinctive needs. Several social workers may be on contract to serve different communities of color and different needs within the same site.

Quality Assurance Issues

Services may be accessed through the site but provided at the location most supportive of the family and the child. For example, a Chicano/Latino student may receive counseling services from the local non-profit service agency providing

employment placement services to the parents. Language differences and confidentiality issues can be dealt with more effectively. Community service agencies and government agencies can truly act as resources.

"A major challenge involves quality assurance issues"

A major challenge involves quality assurance issues: the need to prove quality of services and to focus parents on importance of options for their child; attention to personalized/ individualized services (no one-size-fits-all approach); program development and delivery, and evaluation with stakeholder involvement.

"[A]cross the various communities of color, common needs have emerged"

In particular, across the various communities of color, common needs have emerged based upon discussions by focus groups of parents, service providers, and community members, in addition to research. These include the following needs for:

- greater use of family (including extended family and the community) as resources;
- roles that make parents feel more important;
- transportation;
- child care and convenient location of services physically centered around schools;
- committed individuals who teach from the heart;
- staff who reflect the cultural and gender breakdown of clients;
- staff to serve as role models;
- recognition and use of students as resources;
- valuing of different cultures, while also recognizing differences within a given community;
- development and retention of resources within the community;
- selection of community people to work with CLCs, and
- community ownership of the schools.

Common Features of Successful Programs

The following guidelines are common features of successful programs:

1. **A Realization That There Is No One Perfect Model.** Clearly, there are many different needs in the various communities, and no one model meets all of the needs of all communities. However, an inventory of the history, norms, politics, and needs of an individual community aid in planning the Community Learning Center's service integration component. Actively involving each community in the process is essential, not only for input, but also for support for the project.

2. **A Common Vision, Shared Decision-Making and Accountability**. A child-centered, family-supportive vision is central to all Community Learning Center projects. Much of the research on successful service integration suggests that interagency councils, which serve as a mechanism for jointly developing common goals, directions, and criteria for evaluation of programs, are helpful in meeting common goals and vision. It is essential to assure involvement of stakeholders

(parents and students) and a community presence on these councils. Success is assured only if roles and responsibilities are clear and accountability mechanisms are in place that address not only measures of service integration and quality of service, but also the features of effective collaboration.

"[A]gency roles and relationships must be clearly defined ... and incentives must be provided for ... cooperation"

3. **Staff Commitment and Cooperation.** Top level cooperation, as well as the commitment level and cooperation of agency staff, are central to the success of collaborative models. Collecting input throughout the process helps staff feel ownership in the project and lowers resistance to change. In addition, agency roles and relationships must be clearly defined from the outset and incentives must be provided for good communication and cooperation across agencies. When problems do arise, it is best if they are resolved at the lowest possible level.

4. **A Reasonable Time Frame.** Reasonable time frames for needs assessment, program design, implementation, and evaluation are needed. Because planning and adjustment must continue throughout the entire life of the program in order for collaboration to succeed, it is important to realize that such processes themselves absorb great amounts of time and energy. Successful collaboratives allow ample time for agencies to work together to lay a firm foundation for the collaboration. ❑

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Because creating a Community Learning Center is a major undertaking requiring sustained effort, a Community Learning Center needs the energy and creativity of all stakeholders as change agents. It is crucial to involve the power of a broad group in the community and to reinforce the mission and bring about major advances in learning for all. Parents, students, staff, and other community members provide a strong force for accomplishing these important efforts and overcoming obstacles. A strong base of support wins over many in the community, creating an essential base and, in turn, helps the Centers to accomplish their missions.

"[A] Community Learning Center needs the energy and creativity of all stakeholders as change agents"

Parent Involvement

Parents have crucial roles in their childrens' learning and in the functioning of the school. They bring essentially one item to the school agenda: they want a good education for their child! They cling tenaciously to this point. Their commitment is authentic since responsibility to their child's welfare is foremost.

Parent persistence accounts for much of the speed of educational progress in schools with site councils where parents have a prestigious role. Of paramount importance is that parents represent the diversity of the student body. A council comprised only of parents of academically high-performing students may overlook, the needs of other types of students, thereby failing to address curriculum issues that enable all students to succeed.

"Parent persistence accounts for much of the speed of educational progress"

Entrenched attitudes or practices in schools are often very resistant to change from within. Some educators may respond with defensive actions, wishing to preserve traditional programs even if those programs are inappropriate for the community. For example, they may wish to emphasize a highly college-bound curriculum in a community where few students participate in higher education. And some educators may not be interested in parental interaction, after-school programs, open houses for the community, multi-cultural/ gender fairs, or personal accountability for student performance. Parents can be the ameliorating energy to identify and eventually consign such practices away from their children and their school.

"Entrenched attitudes or practices in schools are often very resistant to change from within"

Bringing educators, parents and students to the decision-making table results in less blaming and finger-pointing and more genuine problem-solving behavior by

"It's too easy for parents to blame teachers or for teachers to blame parents when they're in separate groups."

all parties. It's too easy for parents to blame teachers or for teachers to blame parents when they're in separate groups. The solution is to work together, sharing problems and solutions while recognizing and supporting each other's best efforts and intentions. The result is always increased respect for diversity, a fundamental ingredient of America's strength.

Programs for reinforcement of school learning at home have increased learning. Dorothy Rich[3] provides excellent materials of what parents can do in the normal course of living that extends school learning and increases measures of student understanding. It's believed that parent actions at home can dramatically alter their child's school achievement. For example, parents can:

- ✓ Have the child teach them something which was learned at school that day.
- ✓ Ask the child about an action taken to help another person that day.
- ✓ Ask the child what they are looking forward to at school the next day.
- ✓ Initiate a family learning project.
- ✓ Talk with the child about their own learning style.
- ✓ Be a learner in some new activity.
- ✓ Read to and with the child.

"Schools need to train staff in the value of the home-school partnership and how to honor it"

Parents also participate in their student's Personal Learning Plan through conferences with the advisor and child. Parents know their child's abilities and interests and have valuable insights about how to best arrange learning experiences. Schools need to train staff in the value of the home-school partnership and how to honor it through actions and language.

A Headquarters for Lifelong Learning

Stephen Brookfield,[4] in his book *Lifelong Learning in the United States*, identifies the following six indicators of lifelong learning:

1. An integration and equal valuing of all levels and stages of education, from kindergarten to elderhostel.
2. A conceptualization of learning understood as a developmental flow instead of a binary split between adult and childhood learning.
3. An active assessment and exploration of one's own practice being regarded as the chief indicator of professional competence for educators in all arenas of practice.
4. A valuing and supporting of learning wherever and whenever it happens—in families, the workplace, community groups, recreation, etc.
5. A willingness to acknowledge and credit within formal educational programs the experiential learning that adults bring to such programs.
6. An acceptance of the importance of nurturing critical thinking in a democratic society.

The role of Community Learning Centers are to develop lifelong learning practitioners and to provide learning opportunities for people of all ages, from early childhood to senior citizen. The goals include helping individuals to develop competence, a strong sense of self, respect for and sensitivity to others, a keen sense of curiosity about the world, and a love for learning. The Centers seek to disseminate information on local community services and programs and compile a database of community linkages and resources.

"The role of CLCs are to develop lifelong learning practitioners and ... learning opportunities for people of all ages"

In most communities, early childhood services are available. With a philosophy emphasizing the child/parent/Center partnership, the Community Learning Centers assist with accessing and integrating medical services starting early in pregnancy, as well as continued assistance for all families in areas such as nutrition, health education, family planning services, and other areas of need. To aid in the empowerment of parents, information about parenting classes and other family services is made available.

"Community Learning Centers view the entire community as a source for learning ... both formal and informal"

The Community Learning Centers view the entire community as a source for learning. This includes both formal and informal, recreational, and outdoor experiences. Some examples include: Outward Bound; the YMCA/YWCA; environmental learning centers; summer classes for kids ranging from biking, fishing, and French, to cooking, book clubs and study circles, puppet-making and drama, and adult opportunities ranging from bicycle and camping trips to courses in sign language.

"[T]he needs of the "forgotten half"—those youth not going on to traditional four-year colleges—... are included"

To address the needs of the "forgotten half"—those youth not going on to traditional four-year colleges—tech prep, apprenticeships, vocational education, and cooperative education opportunities are included, along with academic learning in the Community Learning Centers, to provide valuable skills and experience needed for the 21st century. These technical skills are crucial for success and should be recognized and valued as such.

Literacy and Adult Basic Education

Literacy and adult basic education programs also are part of a holistic, family-focused approach and a key component of the Community Learning Centers. The National Center for Family Literacy identifies four components which can be integrated to develop a comprehensive approach to family literacy. These include:

- ✓ basic skills instruction for parents or caregivers,
- ✓ preschool or literacy education for young children,
- ✓ regular parent and children interaction, and
- ✓ parent education/support activities.

"Literacy and adult ... programs ... are part of a holistic, family-focused approach"

Adult basic education programs should provide a congenial ambiance for learning. In addition, respect and protection of individual privacy of all learners must occur. Classes should be practically oriented, meaningful to participants and consistent with the diverse needs of adult learners.

Centers should be open year round and many hours a day, with classes offered at various times to accommodate individual learners' work schedules and biological clocks. There should be access to child care and comfortable places within the Center for the adults to meet and socialize. Attempts should be made to link team of providers with business and industry to provide needed services and to show relevance of subjects to the real world. ❑

OTHER DESIGN ELEMENTS

Students as Resources

Students must be seen as a resource and opportunity, not a problem, for they represent an immense untapped resource in schools, if staff will think differently about the process of learning. Learning results from engagement with issues and problems that are real and meaningful to students. The operation of a school offers many opportunities for student involvement. Many schools have students as office or library helpers. Other examples of elementary and secondary students helping with school functions as street crossing guards, as tour guides, in audio-visual departments, as teacher aides, teaching in activity programs or classes, tutoring, and as counselors in peer mediation programs.

"Students ... represent an immense untapped resource in schools, if staff will think differently about ... learning."

Such activities are not interruptions of a student's lessons but are important learnings in of themselves. Students gain much in responsibility, initiative, work habits, human interaction skills, problem solving, systems learning, and various academic skills.

Recent research indicates that students are capable of far more than adults give them credit for.[5] Unquestionably, schools and communities could benefit from children's full participation in the decisions and functions of organizations and are harmed by the lack thereof. Sites must harness youth's energy, idealism, and creativity when the benefits are so great to both youth and the organization. Schools should do far less for students and much more with them!

"Schools should do far less for students and much more with them!"

A major cause of serious behavior problems lies with the passive roles students have in traditional schools. The characteristic classroom with its rows of desks, seat work, and central dominance of the teacher must give way to a great variety of learning activities and projects. Dry-as-dust textbooks and the read-recite-regurgitate model is turning off far more students than are tuned in and learning efficiently.

Four constants are required for youth participation projects:

- The best programs always involve young people in planning and decision making.
- The best projects give students real responsibility for which they are held accountable.
- The work meets a genuine community need and involves working relationships with concerned adults.
- The program has a built-in learning component with time set aside for discussion of and reflection on the experiences.

Adolescents need to:

- Develop and test values through opportunities for commitment, reflection, and exposure to different points of view.
- Experiment with adult roles and explore adult possibilities in lifestyles, careers and philosophies.
- Be accepted as responsible members of a group.
- Test their competence in bearing responsibility for work which affects other people—to succeed and even to fail, if need be—while they are still under the supervision of an understanding adult.

"The community and school must provide a myriad of opportunities for service"

Ruthanne Kurth-Schai's research supports extending these views to encompass children as well as older youth. The community and school must provide a myriad of opportunities for service, for making a contribution to the well-being of the organization.

Students must assist in the running of their school. As such, they become immersed in the tough problems of management, finance, discipline, and facility maintenance. They give of themselves in service to the school by handling important tasks. Students deeply involved in the workings of the school learn far more. Service in the school and the community provides valuable growth experiences for students. They find themselves and test their abilities in the crucible of real tasks. They learn how to handle responsibility and then to live up to the faith others have placed in them.

"Students, when valued, make an enormous contribution to a school."

Students, when valued, make an enormous contribution to a school. They can help with the daycare program. They can help decorate and clean the school. They can work in the food service program. They can teach, tutor, counsel, mediate, and help other students. In fact, schools should do nothing students could be taught to do. Anything less denies students valuable learning experiences and cuts them off from real life and participation in the organization.

Program Choice

A choice of programs must be provided for students, parents and staff. A new school program, no matter how good, attracts supporters and detractors. The new program will seem strange to some. Some parents will hold off support and want the new program to mature or to prove itself. Some people prefer a "classic" or traditional education because they did well in such a program. Some fear the new program will not prepare their children adequately for higher education. Some see the lessened use of textbooks as "soft" education and not rigorous. Some think if children and youth enjoy school, something is wrong because school should be hard.

When faculty hear of a new program, particularly one that departs radically from the familiar, some will be early adopters, others more reserved and some can be counted on to dislike the program even to the point of harsh resistance or sabotage. Many a fine new program has been terminated because a vocal, vociferous minority of staff and parents made it their mission to oppose the program. People do this for various reasons: philosophical differences, honest differences of view, misunderstanding, professional jealousy, etc.

Choice provides a remedy to all this. Failure to provide choice can prematurely end a program. There must be more than the new program to choose from. No one should be required to attend or to serve in the new program. Evidence shows that when people (including students) make a choice, satisfaction, commitment, and productivity goes up.

"Failure to provide choice can prematurely end a program."

The Facility

The learning environment of schools hasn't changed much during the past century. There are still the double-loaded corridors or long halls with classrooms on each side, each with rows of forward-facing desks awaiting the measured beat of teacher instructions.

Community Learning Center facilities need to support their innovative programing. Their buildings must be visually stimulating, more action-oriented, and less classroom-bound. They need to be made for student engagement on projects (working alone or in small teams), outward or world and nature oriented, comfortable, containing a variety of work spaces. Some small, medium and large group multipurpose rooms are needed. The main activities take place in "doing" spaces: labs, studios, workshops, exploration and discovery centers, theaters of learning, carrels, kitchens, shops, craft centers and media centers. There should be a greenhouse and animal center.

"CLC facilities need to support ... innovative programing .... buildings must be visually stimulating, more action-oriented, and less classroom bound."

Equipment and facilities must be integrated with community-based learning experiences, inviting to the community, and controlled for extended hours usage. The building needs to be wired for the 21st century to accommodate changing technology. Display units and walls are needed for student creations with ample storage space provided for student projects.

Reallocation of Resources

The critical issue facing the next generation of Americans is improving education for children within budgets educators view as too limited. By consensus, the present system produces unacceptably low results: too many students are learning obsolete material, too many students don't like school, learn little that they believe relevant to their future, and drop out of education and society at great

public loss and cost. How then do schools generate much greater performance (that is, better learning for all students) using resources presently available? For most educators, the answer: more money to do the job right.

The Community Learning Centers believe that better education and learning occur when teachers have the training, experience, freedom, and resources to get results. Restructuring education to let this occur is the goal of this design.

"[G]reater resources for education ... are unlikely in the near future"

An essential premise is that substantially greater resources for education from Federal, State and school district budgets are unlikely in the near future. Such has been the pattern since the early '80s. Notwithstanding traditionalists pressure to the contrary, that trend appears unavoidable.

We believe that the most expensive—and thus unachievable—course for better education is to simply overlay the current schools with the traditional strategies: smaller class sizes, longer school years, higher salaries for all professionals, better training. Money has not been available to do all these, and will not be so in the foreseeable future. With the best of intentions, funders (Congress, Governors, legislators and local officials) are unable to satisfy all of these demands. Discretionary dollars that have historically gone to education will increasingly fund other demands: medical care, training for the unemployed, homeless, child care, and rebuilding public infrastructures. Schools will do well to hold their own and keep up with inflation.

"More can be done through reallocation of the same resources and by including heretofore untapped resources."

Like other public and private institutions that have survived and improved, better education in the '90s and beyond for all students must come from a more effective use of revenues. More can be done through reallocation of the same resources and by including heretofore untapped resources. Community Learning Centers must emphasize greater decision-making authority for and creativity from teachers (the most important professionals in the system) and the effective application of available, but under-utilized, resources: technology, paraprofessionals, and students.

Community Learning Centers use these assets in support of the best efforts of teachers as they rethink their roles and determine how the great challenges of education can be met in new ways. We believe this can be done, not through incremental improvements to fix the present system, but rather through systemic change.

"Education today is still too labor intensive, much like agriculture was at the turn of the century."

Education today is still too labor intensive, much like agriculture was at the turn of the century. The most expensive component of education is staff, approximately 90 percent of the budget. Nationally, the student-to-professional staff ratio is 16 to 1. This always surprises teachers who face classes of 25 to 35 students. Counting all employees, the ratio is just under 10 to 1. It's no wonder teachers complain about lack of money for field trips, computers, dark room supplies, training, etc. Very little is left after personnel costs have been paid. Adding to the personnel budget does little good and further erodes dollars available for other important needs.

Tor Dahl, a world expert on productivity, has analyzed educators at work, specifically teaching. He states current teacher tasks fall into three categories:

- Tasks that teachers should do because the task requires professionally trained expertise.
- Tasks teachers do now that others could do because the task doesn't require professional training.
- Tasks that no one should do. Such tasks could be discontinued.

By eliminating unnecessary tasks and reassigning others to para-professionals, volunteers, and technology, staffing can be reduced and the dollars can be put into modern tools. Instead of schools being equipment poor, students and teachers will be empowered with modern technology. This is the equivalent of capitalizing employees in business to increase productivity.

"By eliminating unnecessary tasks and reassigning others ... staffing can be reduced and the dollars ... put into modern tools."

The most expensive people, experienced teachers, become elevated in status to facilitators of learning and there would be an essential core of them. The reallocated dollars train and employ a larger number of paraprofessionals who would, at the teacher's direction, do many of the tasks that teachers shouldn't do because it doesn't require that degree of training.

"The most expensive people, experienced teachers, become elevated in status"

In areas of high unemployment, parents can be hired and trained under STRIDE or JTPA to work in the Community Learning Centers. These parents would perform tasks with students and other parents under the direction of school personnel. The education system thus becomes more integrated with the social service system and the community by providing training for adults.

In addition, teachers' critical roles are supplemented enormously by effective use of an untapped resource: the student body. If we are serious about harnessing the energy and idealism of youth, then we must give them important roles. This extends the practice in every school of having student helpers in the office, library, or classroom. Now, students are expected to help operate their school in many ways: cross-age tutoring; cooperative learning activities; school beautification; greeting visitors; maintenance; discipline; gathering evaluation data; etc. Each of these tasks is performed under the direction of teachers and other school personnel and designed as important learning experiences.

Students play significant roles in their schools and, therefore, motivation and commitment are enhanced greatly. Teachers who have used youth — even troubled youth — as a resource, report a completely changed equation toward student affiliation with school and learning. Students who are energized, interested, and involved learn with ease and speed.

"A critical cost-effective strategy involves contracting for non-educational, but necessary, services"

A critical cost-effective strategy involves contracting for non-educational, but necessary, services largely aimed at improving a student's readiness to learn. While many students have high needs for health and other social services, it is unduly

expensive to employ only full-time certificated teachers for all the social needs of students. Contracting for just the right amount and kind of service increases flexibility and control. For example, a chemical health specialist could be contracted for several hours a week to advise staff. Another provider might specialize in youth support groups. The American Association of Educators in Private Practice provide guidelines on contracted services.

"Community Learning Centers significantly expand the use and effectiveness of site-based management"

Community Learning Centers significantly expand the use and effectiveness of site-based management for more effective use of available resources. What happens in most instances of site-based management is that control over resources is not given to stakeholders. Instead, constraints often are placed on the school's reallocation of resources and on the decision making permitted at the school level by school boards and administrators unwilling to let go. As a consequence, local stakeholders, notwithstanding their abilities and willingness to do things more effectively, are left to propose program changes without the means of changing anything. But, under site-based decision making at CLCs, stakeholders decide the best possible program and, subsequently, how resources are allocated. ❑

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR NEW SCHOOLS

The extraordinary degree of change from conventional practice that Community Learning Centers represent makes their establishment difficult to understand and accept for people accustomed to traditional schooling. To negotiate systemic change in a traditional school runs enormous risks of compromise and resistance. Further complicating the establishment of the Community Learning Centers is the need for their almost instant installation. In effect, the Centers need to accelerate from zero to sixty in a second. For this reason, uncommon measures are necessary.

Because negotiating a systemic change in a traditional school runs enormous risks, uncommon measures are necessary."

As a vehicle for bypassing these barriers, Community Learning Centers must be established via a charter as provided for by statute in some states or by a contract with the local school board. Statutes for chartered schools greatly reduce the number of regulations, policies and laws governing a school, thereby freeing participants to try innovative approaches without constant reminders of rule violations. Charters require learning results or the charter is terminated —the ultimate in accountability. The same provision can apply to contracted schools. The Centers must fulfill their mission of greater learning for all in order to continue.

CLCs must be established as charter or contract schools.

Where a charter is not available or feasible, a contract between the Community Learning Center and the school district can provide many of the provisions of a charter, if it is coupled with waivers from state rules and employee bargaining unit contracts.

The contract must insulate the site from energy-draining negotiations over staffing, budget, and program development. Trust becomes the basis of the contract. The school board and superintendent say, in effect, "We trust that you will exercise sound judgement in the execution of the program. Therefore, we give you wide ranging authority over your program. We are interested in results and respect you sufficiently to determine effective means for accomplishing the results."

"The contract must insulate the site from energy-draining negotiations .... Trust becomes the basis of the contract."

Earlier sections discussed the critical features of a technology-rich school, staff development, and appropriate staff. The implications of these features and other aspects of systemic change are not for the timid or for amateurs. Substantial technical assistance is required for efficient school start-up or conversion. Staff need consultation, examples, rationale strategies, support, and coaching over several years to change their schools. A companion Implementation Manual is being prepared for this purpose. ❑

"Substantial technical assistance is required for efficient school start-up or conversion."

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Community Learning Centers
Expectations of Staff

Rate yourself on a scale of 1(low) to 5 (high)
Indicate + on sub items that are particular strengths

NAME_____

1. **ADVISORY ROLE** __ _____ Rating/Date

Establishes and maintains a personal learning plan for each advisee
- Helps advisees establish learning goals
- Reviews progress toward goals with advisees
- Helps advisee develop a schedule of learning activities
- Monitors advisees' schedules
- Assures service learning component for each advisee

Holds parent/student conference 3X/year
Holds daily productive meeting with advisory group

2. **LEARNING FACILITATION ROLE** __ _____ Rating/Date

Creates brain compatible learning environment
- Provides stimulating/varied activities
- Provides experiential learning
- Provides safe, orderly learning environment

Implements project based learning
Implements interdisciplinary/thematic activities
Involves students as a resource
- Planning learning experiences
- Peer assistance
- School operations
- School/community service

Assesses and monitors student learning outcomes
Assures that activities achieve high standards
Assures that activities cover a broad range of learnings
Taps an array of community and other learning resources
Cooperates with the work of instructional team
Infuses multi-cultural content into program

3. **COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER DEVELOPMENT ROLE** __ _____ Rating/Date

Participates in continuous school improvement
Communicates effectively with stakeholders
Involves parents in governance and decisions
Articulates and advances school mission and beliefs
Understands and supports change processes
Works effectively as team member in:
- Planning
- Shared decision making
- Creative problem solving

Utilizes data objectively in decisions
Contributes to an inviting convivial learning environment
Works toward achieving extended-day, extended-year access
Collaborates with community agencies for student and family needs

4. **ASSESSMENT ROLE** __ _____ Rating/Date

Articulates clear statement of learning standards and outcomes
Designs and selects assessments for appraising:

Program development
Student progress
Staff competence

Uses a wide range of assessment tools:
Performance based
Norm referenced
Criterion referenced
Portfolio
Survey
Other data

5. TECHNOLOGY ROLE __ _____ Rating/Date

Utilizes software to organize and track learning
Uses word processing and other productivity tools
Empowers students to use technology
Word processing
Electronic mail
Spreadsheets
Desktop publishing
Multimedia
Databases (local and remote)
Graphics
Networks
Television: satellite, video/audio production
Radio

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ROLE __ _____ Rating/Date

Implements an individual professional development plan
Aware of strengths and weaknesses
Updates ratings periodically
Uses peer, student and parent input on effectiveness
Records learning activities
Participates in on-going staff development activities
Strives for professional excellence
Maintains an active interest in learning

7. BASED ON THE ABOVE, I WILL WORK ON:

A.

B.

C.

OTHER COMMENTS:

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS
A New American Schools design
SPECIFICATIONS

The Community Learning Centers project is one of the New American Schools Development Corporation design teams. This overview provides the specifications for Community Learning Centers for top to bottom school reform. For further information, contact: Designs For Learning, 2550 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114-1052, phone 612-645-0200, Fax 0240, wayne@designlearn.com

1 Community Learning Center sites represent systemic or comprehensive change. The project does not aim to tune-up or fix schools or programs. Rather, all assumptions about education are open to examination. The end result must be much greater student achievement for **all** youth.

2 Each Community Learning Center site must be a charter school or contract with the governance authority in order to overcome barriers to systemic change. A contract would authorize broad site decision making powers in the areas of program, staffing and budget.

3 Community Learning Centers have well articulated missions and beliefs to guide their development. The foundation of these statements lies with increased achievement by all students. Implication statements determine 1) what practices are not permitted; 2) what school practices are congruent and continue or are expanded; and, 3) what new practices must be initiated.

4 Transformational learning outcomes provide the goals for determining learning experiences. Assessment of achievement is embedded into daily student work and evaluated through competency expectations, exhibitions or presentations, and are checked against nationally normed tests and community established standards.

5 Curriculum is based on achieving standards and outcomes through powerful learning experiences. The school acts as the broker in arranging learning experiences within and beyond its walls for real world linkages. Curriculum is defined as all the learning experiences of the learner irrespective of place, time or person. The school program and curriculum must respect and prize learners of all characteristics: race, gender, religion, disability, and age.

6 Learning experiences feature modern learning principles and are child-centered, life-centered and brain-based, that is, compatible with the power of the brain to assimilate and organize learning.

7 Each learner has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for recording goals, experiences to reach goals and progress toward goals. Each learner has an advisor who meets periodically with the learner and the parent to work on the PLP.

8 Resources are reallocated or redeployed to accomplish program ends. For example, more is spent on instructional materials, instructional equipment, field trips and community based learning than in most schools. Large technology expenditures are capitalized over time. Budgets are lump-sum based and include all revenues students earn from all sources.

9 Staffing is based on elevating the position of teachers to "facilitators of learning" and providing a variety of support staff for specialized functions. Teacher productivity is increased with the assistance of paraprofessionals, clerks, technology specialists, community resource linkers, students, and volunteers. Staff are compensated on the basis of responsibility, skill, productivity and other factors. Teachers agree to three fundamental roles: teaching, advising and participating in

continuous improvement, both professional and school-wide.

10 Staff development occurs the equivalent of 20 to 30 days a year. Staff development is based on a professional development plan each staff member maintains. Ultimate staff accountability for results occurs through transfer or removal of ineffective members from the program.

11 Maximum effective use of technology is used to empower learners and staff. All routinely use word processing, electronic mail, spreadsheets and remote databases. Many use desktop publishing, graphics, music, multimedia, and other programs.

12 Students are viewed as powerful resources. Their active participation in decisions about the school program contributes to their development and adds a considerable measure of deep connection. Their ideas and actions increase the pool of creative thinking for problem solving and their school service responsibilities lighten the work load for staff. This reduces costs for remediation, discipline and property abuse.

13 Decision making is decentralized. Stakeholders, defined as those with an important stake in outcomes, make decisions about program, staffing and budget. Teachers and other professional educators make curriculum decisions and are accountable for student learning outcomes. Decisions are data based and checked against outcomes and results.

14 The program vigorously involves parents: participating in their child's education conferences, sharing their skills and experiences, reinforcing learning at home and by participating in governance. The program assists parents with the development of family learning plans.

15 Partnerships with other units of government, public and private agencies, early childhood programs and post-secondary education make better use of community resources and reduce fragmented services and duplication. Based on needs, programs are family centered and family supportive.

16 Program choice is provided to students, parents and staff. No one is required to attend or work at the Community Learning Centers. However, the student body represents the pool of applicants and reflects the student racial, socio-economic and academic makeup of the community.

17 Community Learning Centers are headquarters for learning for the community. They are open year round and extended hours. Richly stocked collections of learning materials are available on site or electronically for all ages. Adults are served through community education and other means. Parents and pre-school children will be served through early childhood and other family education programs. Employers use learning materials and equipment to foster literacy and productivity outcomes. Centers are closely linked to community libraries and other information sources.

18 Community Learning Centers de-emphasize typical double-loaded corridors of classrooms and emphasize active learning environments such as media centers, production studios, discovery centers, theaters of learning, labs, community based learning and work stations for various computer applications such as desktop publishing. The environment is inviting and convivial.

19 Support mechanisms sustain change. These include staff appropriateness, staff stability, assurance of funding, site decision making, feedback on progress for continuous improvement, and rewards and recognition.